

December 12, 2006

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was recently signed. The purpose was to transfer the responsibility to maintain and update the "National List of Vascular Plant Species that Occur in Wetlands" (List) from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The FWS originally developed the List as part of their National Wetlands Inventory procedure for mapping wetlands in the United States. The Corps is the author of the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual (Manual). The Corps and EPA share responsibilities for determining the geographic scope of Clean Water Act (CWA) jurisdiction.

Updating the List would assist the Corps in operating a more predictable, transparent, and scientifically-based regulatory program. Thus, the Corps agreed to take this responsibility, including providing adequate funding. Scientists at the Corps Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) in Hanover, New Hampshire, will maintain the List, in coordination with the ERDC Environmental Lab in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and share the data with all of the agencies and interested parties. National and Regional Interagency Review Panels, made up of representatives from the Corps, EPA, FWS, and NRCS, will prepare updated National and Regional Lists.